



Committed to Preserving and Enhancing Health in Rural California

# Rural California Fact Sheet

## **RURAL DEFINITIONS**

### ➤ **State: Medical Service Study Area (MSSA)**

MSSAs are sub county designations defined by the California Health Manpower Policy Commission. Rural MSSAs have 250 persons or less per square mile and no township of more than 50,000. Frontier MSSAs have less than 11 persons per square mile. California has a total of 541 MSSAs (Rural MSSAs: 186, Frontier MSSAs: 56).

*Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development GIS Census 2000*

### ➤ **Federal: Rural-Urban Commuting Area Codes (RUCAs)**

Under the RUCA definition, degrees of rurality are coded from 1-10 by their proximity to urban areas and the portion of the population that commutes from rural to urban areas. As of 2005, there are now 85 MSSA communities eligible for Office of Rural Health Policy funding via the RUCA definition.

## **RURAL GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION**

- Rural areas makeup approximately 80% of the total land mass of 156,000 square miles. *2000 Census data*
- Rural California Counties range in size from 20,164 square miles (San Bernardino) to 601 square miles (Amador). - *Sam Wilburn, State Office of Rural Health, Primary and Rural Health Care Systems Branch, DHS at CSRHA Annual Conference, December 4, 2002*
- 1.1 million California residents live in rural areas of Southern California, 2.3 million live in Central, and 1.5 million live in Northern. - *2000 Census data*
- State population at the 1990 Census was 29,760,021. Population at the 2000 Census was 33,871,648. An increase of 4,111,627 or 12%. *Department of Finance 2005*
- The rural population at the 1990 Census was 3,232,00 and the 2000 Census reported 3,896,000 rural residents, an increase of 664,000 or 20%. *Department of Finance 2005*
- There are more white non-Hispanic residents in rural counties than in non-rural counties (59.2% vs. 50.9% respectively). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- More residents of rural counties have received high school diplomas compared to residents of non-rural counties (26.3% vs. 20.0% respectively). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- Fewer residents of rural counties are college graduates compared to residents of non-rural counties (16.5% vs. 23.1% respectively). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- Fewer residents of rural counties have completed post-graduate degrees compared to residents of non-rural counties (10.7% vs. 15.9% respectively). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- Rural persons are over represented among those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*

## **SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS**

- A greater proportion of residents of rural counties compared to residents of non-rural counties are between 100% and 200% of the Federal poverty level (21.5% vs. 16.9%).  
*Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- A lower proportion of residents of rural counties earn more than \$75,000 per year compared to non-rural residents (23.3% vs. 29.1%). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*

## **HEALTH CONDITIONS**

- A greater proportion of residents of rural counties have been told by a health professional that they have high blood pressure compared to residents of non-rural counties (23.7 vs. 21.0% respectively). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2003*
- Of those residents of rural counties that have been told they have high blood pressure, almost two-thirds (65.7%) are taking blood pressure medication. *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2003*
- A greater proportion of residents of rural counties have been told by a health professional that they have diabetes compared to residents of non-rural counties (7.9% vs. 6.8% respectively).  
*Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- Postponing or foregoing dental cleaning is markedly over-represented in rural counties.  
*Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*

## **HEALTH INSURANCE UTILIZATION**

- Of rural residents who have health insurance, approximately 60% is derived from employers.  
*Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- Among the rural residents who have health insurance, the proportion of those with Medicare is greater in rural counties than in urban counties (18.1% vs. 15.7% respectively). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- There is a greater proportion of rural residents covered by Medi-Cal compared to urban residents (13.8% vs. 10.4% respectively). *Behavioral Risk Factors Survey 2004*
- Of the 6.5 million residents of California who were beneficiaries of Medi-Cal services in fiscal year 2003-04 and 2004-05, 1.9 million, or 29.0% live in rural areas. *Department of Health Services – Medical Care Statistics Section 2004*